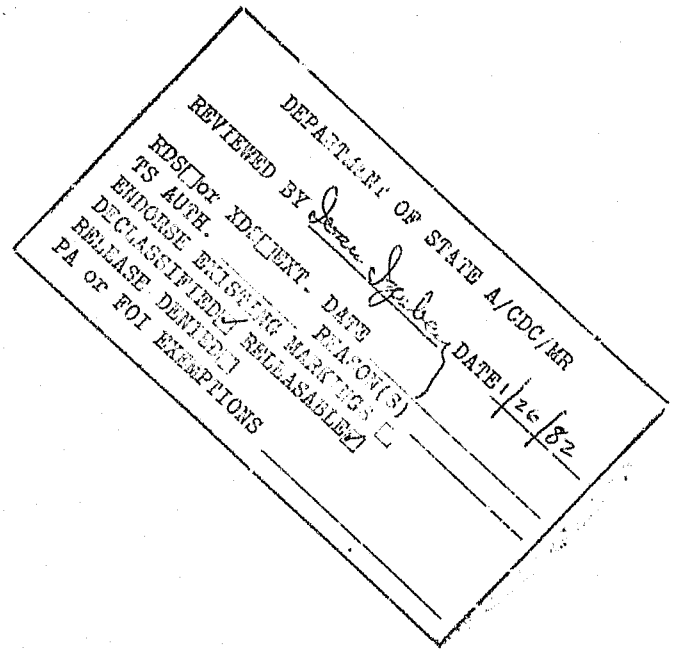
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Revolutionary Dai Viet Party
Nhan Xa
Peoples National Reconstruction Force
Cong Nong Party
VNQDD, Vu Hong Khanh Faction
Viet-Nam Democratic Force
Free Democratic Force

Internal Support:

Quoc Tu Buddhists (split with Ky)
Cao Dai: Tay Ninh (split with Minh)
Progressive Nationalist Movement (majority)
Movement for the Renaissance of the South (split with Minh)

4. General Minh can count on relatively firm endorsements from the leadership of only three organizations, plus significant rank and file support in three other cases. The importance of these groups ranges from the very potent An Quang, Minh's strongest organized base, to some small parties.

5. Probable Pro-Minh Groups

Leadership backing:

An Quang Buddhists
New Peoples Movement
Vietnamese Peoples Force

Internal support:

Cao Dai: Tay Ninh (split with Thieu)
Progressive Nationalist Movement (minority)
Movement for the Renaissance of the South (split with Thieu)

6. Vice President Ky appears to have even less organized backing than Minh. Two organizations, neither of them powerful, may officially back him. He will probably get support within three other groups of varying importance.

7. Probable Pro-Ky Groups

Leadership backing:

Hoa Hao: Minh Faction
Theravada Buddhist Association


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Internal Support:

Quoc Tu Buddhists (split with Thieu)
Catholic hierarchy (minority)
Nhan Xa (minority)

8. Five groups are listed as undetermined, although their memberships in some cases divide discernibly behind certain candidates.

9. Undetermined Groups

Cao Dai: Ben Tre Factions
VNQDD, Southern Faction
VNQDD, Unified Faction (between Minh and Ky)
Greater Solidarity Force (between Thieu and Ky)
National Salvation Front

END SUMMARY.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

10. An Quang Buddhists: The An Quang Buddhists will doubtless support General Duong Van Minh in the event he actually runs as a candidate for president. The only question is the extent of their support--organized massive backing or individual support on the basis of personal preference. An Quang leaders have frequently expressed to us qualified support for Minh but have also indicated that they are seeking a deal with the General. Minh characteristically has apparently resisted such conditional support and held out for unqualified backing. The best estimate is that despite Tri Quang's statement of neutrality on May 25, and despite An Quang's verbiage about a deal, the Buddhists probably will back Minh strongly--even without an arrangement.

11. Quoc Tu Buddhists: Quoc Tu is a negligible political entity, and the instructions of its severely divided leadership probably will not carry much weight with the church's diminished following among the relatively small Northern Buddhist community. Most observers believe that Quoc Tu will support Ky as a fellow Buddhist and Northerner in the event that Ky qualifies and in fact runs for the Presidency. However, their vote will not be unanimous, since Thieu probably will pick up many votes as the most hawkish of the candidates and the one who offers the best chance of stability. The Quoc Tu leadership will also be reluctant to endorse Ky formally and thereby destroy any further support or subsidies from a Thieu administration.

12. Catholic Hierarchy: To the extent that it will speak with an organized voice, the Catholic clergy probably will throw its support to Thieu. However, there may be exceptions in favor of Ky. A few members of the clergy have already shown sympathy for Ky's emphasis on social reform. The Vice President's Northern background will probably attract some Northerners within the hierarcy, and his past hard-lining image may draw other support despite his current doveishness.

13. Hoa Hao: Tuong-Sang Faction: The Tuong-Sang faction of the Hoa Hao has long been a recipient of GVN patronage, as exemplified by the presence of Le Phuoc Sang on the 1970 Senate list of Huynh Van Cao and the government's moderate support for Sang's Hoa Hao University in Long Xuyen. The primary effect of President Thieu's continuing recognition of this faction as the official spokesman for the Hoa Hao minority has been the firm wedding of Tuong's followers to the incumbent administration. Thieu appears, at the moment, to be assured of the votes of that proportion of the Hoa Hao in the Delta--estimated at between 40 percent and 60 percent--who are adherents of the Tuong-Sang group.

14. Hoa Hao: Other Factions: Among the deeply factionalized Hoa Hao, the Hinh group is the only significant political force competing with the Tuong-Sang faction for recognition as the dominant political spokesman for all Hoa Hao. Although representatives of Hinh's faction have made tentative approaches toward a rapprochement with President Thieu, the likelihood remains that Hinh and his followers will eventually turn to either Big Minh or Vice President Ky in the Presidential election, hoping to gain recognition for their claims to speak for the Hoa Hao. Ky may well have an edge in the political bargaining preceding the adoption of a public stand by the Hinh faction, since he continues to have close ties to many Hoa Hao leaders, whom he cultivated successfully during 1967 with ample funds and political concessions. The small, anti-Executive faction among Hoa Hao politicians headed by Phan Ba Cam may be expected to support the candidacy of Big Minh, as a natural outlet for the oppositionist views of this grouping. (See item on Viet-Nam" Peoples Force.) Cam, although a prestigious figure among Hoa Hao believers, probably does not command a significant proportion of the total Hoa Hao vote in the Delta.

15. Cao Dai: Tay Ninh: The attitude of the Cao Dai leadership at the Tay Ninh Holy See toward this year's Presidential election was significantly affected by the recent death of Cao Hoai Sang, ranking leader in the Church hierarchy. For many years, Sang pursued a



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careful policy of non-involvement in national politics, but in recent months he and other leaders of the sect appeared to have endorsed the more activist political philosophy of the Church's Secular Life Commission, whose youthful leadership sought to develop a political role for the Church in both Tay Ninh and national political affairs. Tentative indications that the Cao Dai might support President Thieu in this year's elections had also emerged in the months prior to Sang's death. In the absence of a successor to Sang as the Church's recognized leader, however, the Cao Dai Church appears likely now to adopt a passive attitude toward the election, allowing each believer to vote according to his own preference. In view of Tay Ninh's support for the candidacy of Truong Dinh Dzu during the 1967 voting, there is probably some support for Big Minh. However, Thieu has been trying to cultivate the Cao Dai, and should get a majority of the Cao Dai vote.

16. Cao Dai: Ben Tre Factions: Cao Dai believers in the Delta generally follow one of the dozen or more factions of the Ben Tre Cao Dai sect. The Ben Tre leadership, however, appears to be too divided and weak to impose any one point of view about the elections on the Cao Dai communities which are scattered about the Mekong Delta region. Cao Dai believers in MR 4 will probably vote as individuals for the preferred candidate in their local area, rather than as a united bloc of voters.

ETHNIC GROUPS

17. Ethnic Minorities Solidarity Movement: The probable impact of the EMSM on the Presidential elections is difficult to assess because the EMSM itself is now in a state of flux. Originally, the party had taken a line of firm support for President Thieu through the leadership of Montagnard Y Bling Luon Krong Pang. Disillusionment with Y Bling, disaffection among Montagnards regarding land ownership and use, dissatisfaction among younger educated Montagnards, and inter-tribal differences have, however, gone far recently to fragment the organization and diminish its influence as a whole. Some An Quang Buddhist influence among Montagnards with oppositionist attitudes has come to light in Phu Bon, and it may well be present in other provinces. However, Montagnards as a whole will probably give Thieu a massive vote because they are traditionally very susceptible to guidance by local officials.

18. Cambodians (divided into two main factions, the Theravada Buddhist Association and the Khemmaranikay Association): The Theravada Buddhists, who incline toward Ky in any case, are presently threatening demonstrations unless the Lower House of the National Assembly passes a stalled bill aimed at giving Cambodians official



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status as an ethnic minority. This issue is not of interest to the generally pro-Executive Khemmarankay, but both factions are angry at the government for appointing a Vietnamese to the position of Deputy Director General of Cambodian affairs (who is the effective head of the office since the Director has been ill for months). Also, both factions are demanding the appointment of a Cambodian as Province Chief of Vinh Binh. President Thieu will still probably gain a majority of Cambodian votes, but a large minority could go elsewhere, especially if Ky runs. Ky is relatively popular among the Cambodians but the mass of them will vote as their own leaders and the local officials tell them to.

POLITICAL PARTIES

19. Progressive Nationalist Movement: The PNM leadership insists that the party has made no decision on the Presidential election, and that any decision will only be made one month before the election. This position is partly good tactics to avoid Executive interference with PNM Lower House candidates. However, Vietnamese observers generally believe PNM Deputies will join a pro-Executive grouping in the new Lower House. There are strong indications that many PNM members are already working for Thieu, and it would be difficult for the party to choose any other candidate. In the end, the PNM may hew to its stance of moderate opposition to the extent of not formally endorsing any Presidential candidate, as a way of resolving potential conflicts of opinion within the party's ranks. The Tan Dai Viet core of the party would like to enjoy the [illegible]r that could come from joining the winner, but there is considerable pro-Minh sentiment among the broader ranks that comprise the Movement as a whole. Even without a formal decision most of the PNM cadre will work for Thieu, partly because many of them are civil servants who will be more or less obliged to do so.

20. Revolutionary Dai Viet Party: Several months ago, it seemed virtually certain that the RDV Party would opt for Thieu. Despite a steady drumfire of complaints by Party leader Ha Thuc Ky that the President did not consult him sufficiently, relations between the RDV and Thieu were reasonably close. But recently Ky has backed away from an endorsement of Thieu and his criticisms of the President's leadership have become stronger. It now appears that the RDV will refrain from supporting openly any Presidential candidate until after the Lower House election. This will serve as notification to Thieu that he must support the party's Lower House candidates if he expects RDV backing for the Presidency. In the end, however, the party will probably come out for Thieu regardless of the Lower House outcome, since it opposes Minh's basic approach to national issues and will hesitate to support Vice President Ky as a probable loser.



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21. Nhan Xa: The Nhan Xa, weakened by their split with Information Minister Tinh and lawyer Le Trong Quat's newly formed People's National Reconstruction Force, probably will support Thieu --reluctantly. Nhan Xa strength is in Central Viet-Nam and is primarily based on the Catholic clergy and Can Lao remnants. Thieu's anti-Communism, measured against Minh's role in the coup against patron saint Diem, should swing their vote behind the incumbent. As a political party, the Nhan Xa have legitimate grievances against Thieu for his shabby treatment of the National Social Democratic Front, of which they are members, and his aloofness toward parties in general. Nevertheless, they probably will back Thieu, but with some defections among younger party members to Ky. No support for Minh.

22. People's National Reconstruction Force: The PNRF probably will back Thieu, with minor losses to Ky and possibly to Minh. The PNRF is a reformed Nhan Xa faction which appeals to a broader grouping of elements, predominantly but not exclusively Catholic. The party's present strength is unknown. Ngo Khac Tinh's affiliation with the group behind the scenes is a strong card for Thieu in the PNRF but the party probably cannot influence many voters in any event.

23. Cong Nong Party: The Worker Farmer Party (Cong Nong) is in President Thieu's camp, not because its leaders are all that enraptured with Thieu but because they feel that they have no other place to go. So far Tran Quoc Buu, president of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT), and of the party, has not announced his support of Thieu.

24. VNQDD, Vu Hong Khanh Faction: Vu Hong Khanh's VNQDD is playing its cards very close to the chest on the Presidential election, professing to be interested basically in fielding candidates for the Lower House elections. A member of Thieu's moribund National Social Democratic Front, the party is more likely to opt for Thieu than for any other candidate, but a decision to back Vice President Ky is possible. Support for Minh seems unlikely.

25. VNQDD, Southern Faction: Vice President Ky spoke last June 17 at a ceremony held by the Cholon branch of Nguyen Hoa Hiep's Southern VNQDD. This and other evidence has created the widespread impression that the party will opt for Ky. A prominent party member recently expressed annoyance at this "rumor" of support for Ky and declared that a decision had not been made on the question. It appeared that



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party leader Nguyen Hoa Hiep entertained hopes of running for President himself, which got nowhere. The final position of this party remains in doubt.

26. VNQDD, Unified Faction: The Unified VNQDD will probably follow its previous posture of moderate opposition and back either Ky or Minh. Which of these two candidates will get its support, however, is still uncertain. At this point Minh appears to be the most likely beneficiary, though Ky has been courting this group as well as other political parties. So far the Unified VNQDD is holding its Provincial and Municipal Councilmen to a policy of not endorsing any candidates.

27. Greater Solidarity Force: Primarily Northern Catholic, the GSF is today a shadow of its former vigorous self. The leadership appears split between Thieu and Ky with most, including Chairman Nguyen Gia Hien, favoring Ky. However, the GSF probably can be counted upon to put its vote--negligible though it may be--up for bidding between Thieu and Ky. No support, however, for Minh.

28. Viet-Nam Democratic Force: Senator Nguyen Van Ngai's RDV splinter party, the Viet-Nam Democratic Force, will probably support Thieu. Ngai has explicitly declared that he will back the President, and although he shares other politicians' criticism of Thieu, this position seems firm. Ngai may have made an agreement with Thieu for mutual support, although more probably he has opted for the President without any agreement and merely hopes that support for his party's Lower House candidates will be given in return. The party is small and has little to offer Thieu.

29. Free Democratic Force: The FDF was founded in 1968 by the then Secretary General at the Presidency, Nguyen Van Huong, and has always been a grouping of individuals who want to work closely with the Executive. The party will of course back President Thieu, but will not bring him much significant support since it consists mainly of local personalities who are pro-Executive in any case.

30. New Peoples Movement: The founder of this party, former Chief of State Phan Khac Suu, died in 1970 but the party has carried on under the leadership of Professor Nguyen Thanh Vinh. It appears to have some modest strength in MR's III and IV, based on supporters of Suu, plus some strength in MR I where Vinh is known as a respected VNQDD figure. The NFM will probably support Minh.



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31. Vietnam Peoples Force: Headed by Secretary General Phan Ba Cam, an oppositionist Hoa Hao politician, this party consists of some aging revolutionaries of various parties whose day is past, plus some Hoa Hao support loyal to Cam. It has formally made no choice, but is likely to support Minh.

32. Movement for the Renaissance of the South: Mainly a small elite of teachers and civil servants in Saigon and the Delta, the MRS is based on the principle of advancing the interests of Southerners and has been in opposition to President Thieu. Thus its natural inclination would have been to support Southern oppositionist Duong Van Minh. However, Tran Van Huong is the political figure most respected by MRS members, and his acceptance of the Vice Presidential position with Thieu has caused a serious split in MRS ranks with a large number, perhaps even a majority, swinging to support of the Thieu-Huong ticket.

33. National Salvation Front: The NSF is now on record as being "neutral" and Chairman Don continues to flutter between the principal candidates. However, a substantial number of members may support Minh--despite Don's statement of non-support--while others will support Ky. The party is therefore deeply split. Don still has time to maneuver and might even back Thieu. Essentially, the NSF is another minor grouping, and because its leader is unpredictable, its eventual position is similarly difficult to foresee.

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